

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

RETAINED REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

1 Purpose of Report

This report informs Members of the progress of the Retained Review Implementation Project.

2 Recommendations

Members are requested to note the progress of the Retained Review Implementation Project.

3 Background

At its meeting on 14 December 2005 the Fire Authority resolved to:

- Note the recommendations of the Best Value Review into the Retained Duty System within Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service; and
- Approve investment in the Retained Service, as detailed within the draft Best Value Review and summarised within the report.

At the subsequent meeting on 8 February 2006 the Fire Authority agreed to:

- Sanction the continuation of the Retained Review Team; and
- Agree a change of reference for the Retained Review Team from Review to Implementation of Recommendations.

4 Progress

The appendix contains a Progress Report Matrix, which gives an overall picture of the progress of the implementation project.



5 Outcomes

Much of the Retained Review focused on the issues surrounding the recruitment and retention of Retained Duty System firefighters and how their profile could be raised. Whilst it is still too early to be sure of the long-term outcomes of the recommendations made within the Best Value Review Report, early indications are that progress is being made in those vital areas.

Retained Support Officers (RSO's)

Retained Review Team Recommendation No 17 Retained Support Officers

That the position of Retained Support Officer (8) be created within the Brigade and that their responsibilities include the provision of support for retained personnel and the organisation in general by:

- i providing operational support by organising recruitment campaigns, and liaising with employers and families;
- ii co-ordinating district community fire safety campaigns, training staff and dealing with the associated administration;
- iii assisting with the organisation of district training exercises, including assessments of competence and the associated administration;
- iv providing operational cover, when required;
- v sitting on community safety partnerships; and
- vi liaison with district, parish and town councils.

The RSO's commenced their duties on 7 August 2006, starting with a one-week induction course.

Since that date the RSO's have been providing the much needed support identified in the Best Value Review. Their role and function is one that will develop over time, but initially they have been busy developing links within their communities and assisting Shropshire's Retained Duty Staff with many of the tasks that have previously caused them some concern, either through lack of time to devote to the issue or lack of resources.

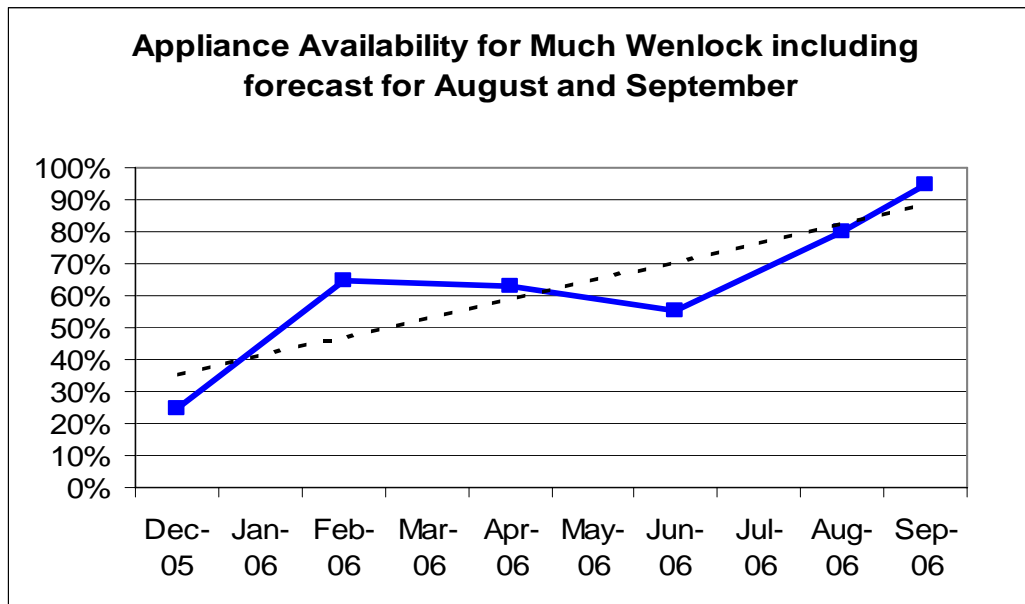
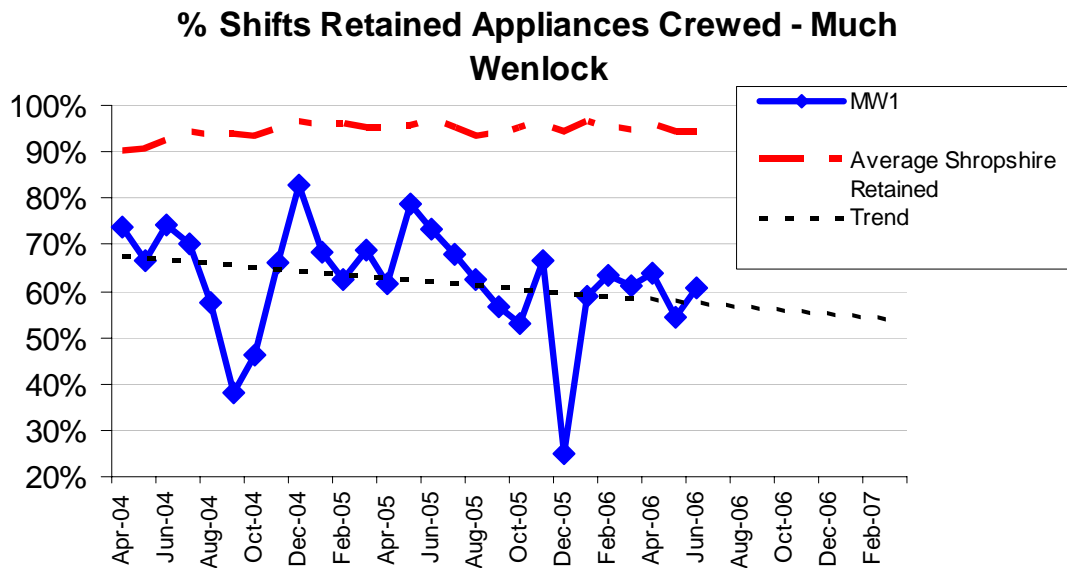
Appliance Availability

A number of our Retained Duty System stations have struggled to maintain appliance availability during daytime hours between Monday and Friday. Much Wenlock, Craven Arms and Cleobury Mortimer Fire Stations being the poorest performers, simply due to the lack of daytime cover personnel in those areas.

Since 14 August 2006, however, the Brigade has been able to mobilise RSO's in order to maintain appliance availability. On the following page is an example of the impact on one station (Much Wenlock) of the effective use of RSO's.



The following graphs show the availability of the Much Wenlock appliance from April 2004 to June 2006 and the *predicted* availability for August and September 2006.



The trend shown for Much Wenlock is repeated at Cleobury Mortimer and Craven Arms. Overall from 14 August to 28 September 2006, RSOs have provided over 450 hours of operational cover.



Recruitment

Appliance availability and recruitment are very closely linked; daytime cover is vital to the maintenance of an effective emergency response. The problems associated with the provision of this cover were documented in both the review carried out by the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and our own Best Value Review (BVR). Primarily, the main issues centre on employers releasing employees and the general lack of awareness of the Retained Duty System within our communities.

A number of the recommendations contained within Shropshire's BVR focussed on liaison with employers and raising awareness. Uppermost amongst these has been the introduction of 8 Retained Support Officers (RSO's), who are now actively working in our communities, building relationships with employers and raising awareness by addressing community groups. The provision of relatively cheap means of advertising, such as external notice boards at all of our stations and vehicles with recruitment decals, have all helped the cause.

RSO's are now becoming involved in the full recruitment process, from presentations to employers and employees through to recruit tests and further development.

The current recruitment position is shown in the following table.

Stage	Numbers	Priority Stations
Awaiting Interview	5	4
With District Officer	2	1
Awaiting Tests	16	8
Current Recruits Course	7	1
Total	30	14

The next recruits course is scheduled to begin in January. At the moment, excluding those currently on a course, there are 23 people in the system. At the current rate it is anticipated that there will be a rise in application forms received from 55 – 60 per year to 115 – 120 per year, i.e. a 100% rise.

For 2007, 4 Retained Recruits Courses have been programmed as opposed to the normal 3. Each course will accommodate 10 recruits.

Retention

On average over the last four years the turnover of Retained Duty System staff has been 9%. In 2005 19 personnel left the Service. Retained Duty System staff leave the Brigade for a number of reasons, primarily due to changes in their personal circumstances, i.e. they move away from the area or their employment situation changes. As identified in the Retained Review, some, however, have left the Service due to the affect on their work - life balance. Many of the recommendations contained in the review were aimed at improving this balance and, therefore, reducing the number of personnel, who leave each year.



Community Fire Safety

Community Fire Safety work is now being carried out across the County by all Retained Duty Stations.

	Home Safety Visits	Detectors Fitted
2005/06	13,000	4,233 (out of 7,900 homes visited)
2006/07 (1 April – 31 July)	6,305	2,167 (out of 3,000 homes visited)

National Issues

The Retained Duty System – Making Change Happen A Department for Communities and Local Government/Chief Fire Officers Association Workshop

On 25 and 26 September 2006 the Head of District Performance and the Retained Project Manager attended the above workshop and presented a paper entitled 'Engaging with Employers and Raising the Retained Duty System Profile'. The work being carried out in Shropshire is widely recognised as best practice.

6 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

7 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8 Appendix

Progress Report Matrix

9 Background Papers

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Fire and Rescue Service Retained Duty System, A Review of the Recruitment and Retention Challenges (February 2005)

Fire and Rescue Service Circular 7 – 2005 Review of the Retained Duty System (February 2005)

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority

14 December 2005, Report 9 – Retained Review

8 February 2006, Report 12 – Retained Review



Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	
Capacity		Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Equality and Diversity		Retained	*
Efficiency Savings		Risk and Insurance	
Environmental		Staff	
Financial		Strategic Planning	
Fire Control/Fire Link		West Midlands Regional Management Board	

For further information about this report please contact Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Phil Clarke, Retained Project Manager, on 01743 260232.



RETAINED REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS PROGRESS REPORT MATRIX 18 OCTOBER 2006

No	Recommendation Heading	Priority	Comments	Progress	
				A*	B*
1	Terminology		Implemented		
2	XL Cabs		In progress, Albrighton Prees, & Ellesmere on the run.		
3	Employers recruitment packs		Packs complete, awaiting covers and document folders.		
4	Employers support system		Work ongoing, ICT department working on web site information.		
5	Links with business organisations		RSO's fully involved.		
6	Liaison with Councils		RSO's fully involved.		
7	Partners information in recruitment packs		Partners information included in t recruitment packs.		
8	National TV campaign		Copy of Report sent to ODPM. Presentation at RDS Conference Leicester		
9	Using current assets (i & ii) Using current assets (iii)		External notice boards at all stations, 4 x RSO vehicles dedicated to recruitment.		
10	Targeting female applicants		National campaign launched, also local taster sessions held in June at Telford Central.		
11	Formalise recruitment procedure		Work commenced and is ongoing.		
12	Recruitment Tests		Equipment now available for new selection tests.		
13	Exit interviews		District Officers and OIC's aware, database in operation in HR.		
14	Policy Group mechanism		New District Meeting structure implemented		
15	Policy Group /CFA Reports		Implemented from April 1 st		
16	Communications procedure		Work commenced and is ongoing.		
17	Retained Support Officers (8)		Retained Support Officers in position.		
18	Cleaning/Maintenance and Admin		Implemented from April 1 st .		
19	Retained Project Manager		In position.		
20	Pay		Monitoring other schemes.		
21	Employers information, call stats etc (i & ii) Acknowledging employers (iii)		Statistics available for all stations.		
22	Partners information, call stats etc		Statistics available for all stations.		
23	Additional hours training		Implemented from April 1st		
24	Associate Trainers		Being actioned by Training and Development staff.		
25	Training by Wholetime Watches		Being actioned by Training and Development staff.		
26	Community Fire Safety		Implemented.		
27	Management Procedures		New Management Information System at tendering stage.		
	Priority		Progress	A* = Progress @ 19/07/06 B* = Progress @ 09/10/06	
	Gold Target - Implementation Target 1 st Oct 2006			Implemented	
	Silver Target - Implementation Target 1 st Jan 2007			Work has commenced	
	Bronze Target – Implementation Target 1 st April 2007			No action at present	